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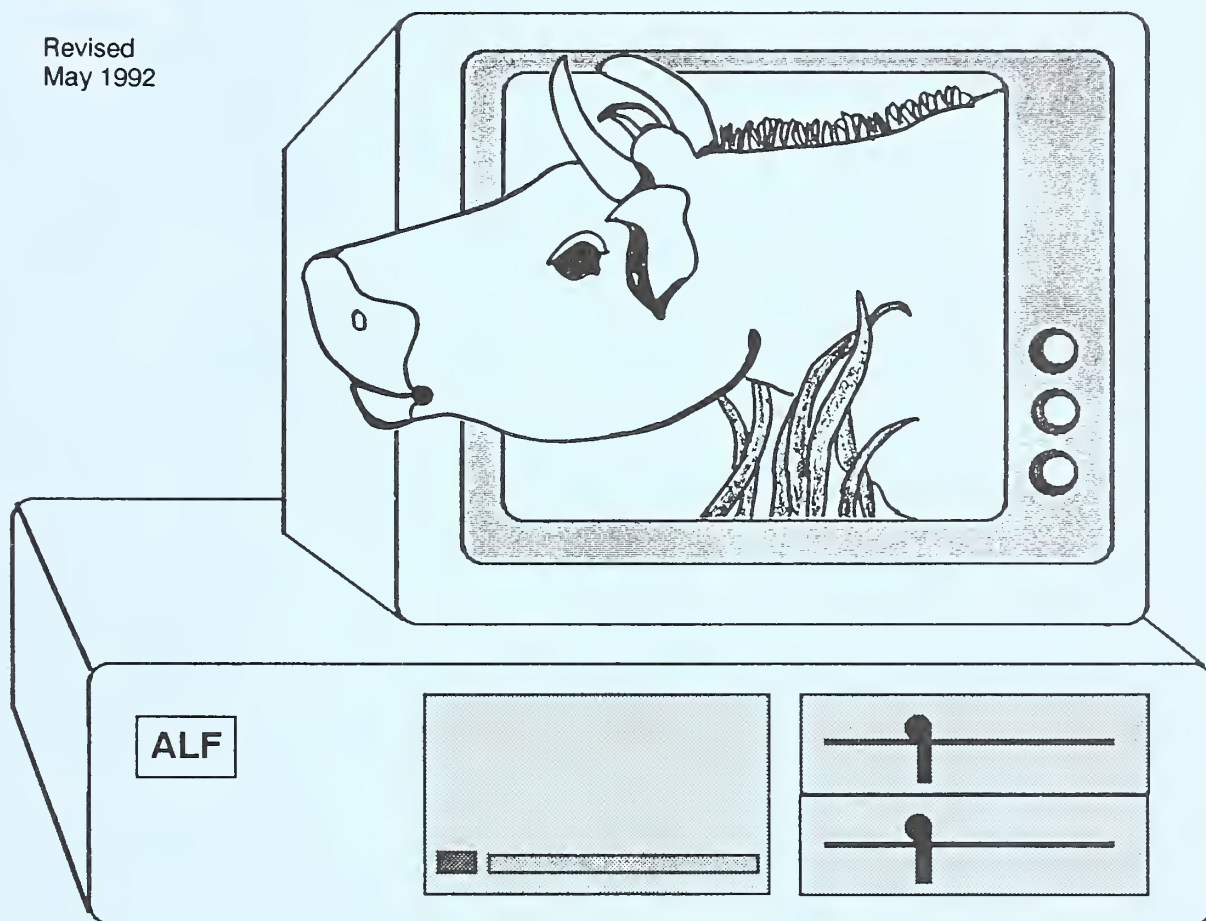20705-2351

National Agricultural Library

Revised
May 1992

ALF
(Agricultural Library Forum)

The National Agricultural Library's
Electronic Bulletin Board System

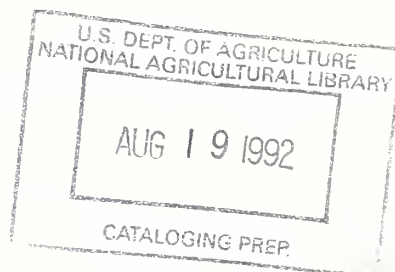## Brief Guide

ALF (Agricultural Library Forum)
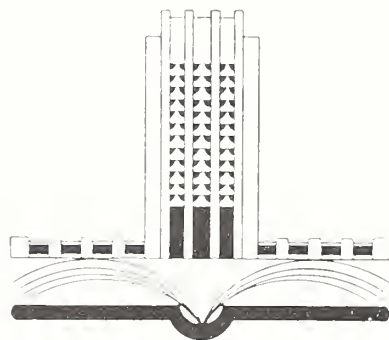
The National Agricultural Library's Electronic Bulletin Board System

Brief Guide
(Revised May 1992)

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Contents

Introduction

The Agricultural Library Forum (ALF) is an electronic bulletin board system (BBS) operated by the National Agricultural Library (NAL) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 10301 Baltimore Boulevard, Beltsville, Maryland 20705-2351.

NAL has prepared this "Brief Guide" to help participants get started on ALF and to describe the system's major features and how to use them effectively. It is by no means comprehensive. Once the caller is logged onto ALF, online help files are available for further guidance (See *Appendix B: ALF Menu Commands*).

The National Agricultural Library welcomes all contributions, suggestions, and ideas for making this bulletin board a successful working and learning tool for its users. Callers are encouraged to donate programs and other files of interest to the agricultural community. However, all files donated must contain only information that is in the **public domain**. Neither the National Agricultural Library nor the Systems Operator (SYSOP) is responsible for any of the data that is shared on this bulletin board system.

ALF is menu driven and uses single letter commands. This guide will show commands using these formats:
1) **Left bracket, command letter, right bracket, remainder of command string.** For example, [F]iles, or [E]nter Messages, or [J]oin Conferences.
2) **Command letter, right parenthesis, remainder of the command string.** For example, N)one, or C)ontinue

To activate a command, type the bracketed capital letter or the capital letter to the left of the parenthesis, followed by a carriage return (CR).

NOTE: See "Turbokey" for carriage return options.

Purpose   ALF is a convenient, economical tool for electronically accessing information about NAL's programs, projects, products and services, and for exchanging information among agricultural libraries, information centers, and others in the agricultural field.

Availability   ALF is open to anyone with an interest in agriculture. The board is accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The system is down for approximately 15 minutes each weekday morning for system maintenance procedures.

Assistance   For assistance with logging onto the system, call ALF's SYSOP on 301-504-5113. After you are logged onto ALF, you may [E]nter a message for the SYSOP or read online help screens for additional assistance.

Features   ALF runs on a stand-alone microcomputer using RBBS-PC software. Four basic types of electronic communication are supported: messages, bulletins, conferences, and file transfer.

● **System Software**   Remote Bulletin Board System for Personal Computers (RBBS-PC) is the computer software that operates ALF. RBBS-PC is a menu-driven program for IBM-PC compatible computers serving as hosts for the BBS systems it supports. The Capital PC User's Group (P.O. Box 6128, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906, phone: 301-762-6775) distributes this "user-ware" program which may be copied and passed along at no charge so long as it is not altered.

● **Messages**   The system allows participants to electronically exchange comments or ideas. Messages may be entered in the main board and in conferences. (See *Chapter 3: Messaging*)

● **Bulletins**   Bulletins are brief announcements about library policies, BBS system features, programs, services, contacts, recent publications, upcoming events, training workshops, job vacancies, and more. On ALF, bulletins are referred to as "Bullets," and each is assigned a number by which it may be accessed. (See *Chapter 4: Bulletins*)

● **Conferences**   This system allows callers to participate in special interest group discussions. Currently there are 14 public conferences including a roundtable ("AGRICOL") for NAL's AGRICOLA database users, and several user forums for those interested in subjects such as animal welfare ("AWF"), biotechnology ("BT"), rural development or rural health ("RIC"), or water quality ("WIN"). (See *Chapter 5: Conferencing*)

● **File Transfer**   Public domain files including agriculture-related software and non-copyrighted text files may be "uploaded" (sent) to or "downloaded" (received) from ALF. Files currently available for downloading number in the hundreds, and include items such as full-text of some bibliographic documents published by the NAL; technical notes; newsletters developed by NAL's Information Centers; numerous lists of information on NAL's collection and available publications; AGRICOLA database features and notes; as well as expert advisory systems developed by NAL staff and users. (See *Chapter 6: File Transfer*)

[NOTE: **Uploading is restricted**. An appropriate upload security level must be requested from SYSOP.]

Chapter 1: Getting Started

Equipment   To access ALF, you will need the following:

Personal computer or computer terminal. Almost any computer or terminal which can be connected to a telephone line by a modem will be sufficient, including IBM-PC or compatibles, Apple, Tandy, etc.

Modem. A modem is a device which connects a computer or terminal to a telephone line. Any modem compatible with your own computer should work. ALF accepts modem speeds of 300, 1200, 2400, or 9600 baud.

Communication program. Communications software is necessary only when using a personal computer to connect to ALF since most terminals have built-in communications programs. Any communications software will be sufficient to interact with ALF. Examples include CrossTalk, Qmodem, PC-Talk, Procomm, SmartCom, Telix, etc.

Software parameters   Certain communication software parameters must be set so that your computer or terminal is compatible with (i.e., uses the same language) ALF. These settings are usually made on the software's or terminal's "setup" or "communication parameter" screen. Refer to the software or terminal manual for further instructions. Set your communcation software's parameters as follows:

Communication Software Settings	
Baud Rate:	300, 1200, 2400, or 9600
Data Bits:	8
Stop Bit:	1
Parity:	None
Duplex:	Full
Emulation:	None, or ASCII or TTY

Online registration   Preregistration for ALF is suggested **ONLY** for those participants completely unfamiliar with dialing into computer systems or networks. Call (301) 504-5113 to preregister. The SYSOP will record the caller's first and last name, computer type, city and State, and other necessary data. The SYSOP will then assign the caller a password for accessing ALF.

Chapter 2: Logging On

Logon Procedure

The following is a step-by-step process for accessing ALF. Once the initial logon (steps 2-9) has been completed, future calls to ALF will require entering only the caller's name and password to gain access (see Future Logon Shortcut box, page 10).

● **Step 1 Dialing in**

Dial **(301) 504-6510, (301) 504-5111, (301) 504-5496** or **(301) 504-5497**. These phone numbers also are on the Federal Telephone Service (FTS). Use the area code when calling long distance or when calling locally from Washington, DC, or Virginia. When dialing, remember to include any additional numerical prefixes which may be required to reach an outside phone line. These ALF phone numbers also are on the FTS (Federal Telephone Service).

TIP: If you plan to access ALF on a regular basis, program these phone numbers into the auto-dialing feature of your communications software.

● **Step 2 Logon**

In approximately 5 seconds, a welcome message will be displayed on the screen. At the prompts, enter your first name, last name, and city and State, each followed by a carriage return (CR).

NOTE: Default options are in brackets [ ]. To invoke the default option, either type the option's letter or just press (CR), or type any **other character** which is **not** listed on the command line at the bottom of the screen. **Example:**

```
What is your FIRST Name?  Jane (CR)
What is your LAST Name?  Doe (CR)

Checking Users...

Are you JANE DOE? ([Y],N)
What is your CITY and STATE? anycity, anystate (CR)
```

● **Step 3 Registration**

The system checks the user log and recognizes that the caller is a new user. A statement of ALF's purposes and policies is displayed. The caller, after reading these ground rules, may choose to: C)hange FIRST name/LAST name/CITY and STATE, D)isconnect, or [R]egister.

● **Step 4**
Password

The system prompts the caller to enter and to confirm a password of his/her choice to use for future access.

> Enter PASSWORD you'll use to logon again? xxxx
>
> Re-enter password for Verification (dots echo)? ....

Please REMEMBER your password. If you should forget your password, telephone the SYSOP (voice) to ask for password lookup assistance.

● **Step 5**
Graphics

A "Graphic Help File" is displayed on the screen. Three options are given for tailoring ALF's visual output to the caller's personal computer system. **Example:**

> GRAPHICS wanted: N)one, A)scii-IBM, C)olor-IBM, H)elp? n
>
> GRAPHICS: None

Although RBBS supports graphics, there are no graphic menus or screen displays used in ALF at this time. (Note: When in doubt choose "N)one".) RBBS-PC recommends that the caller experiment to determine which types of graphics his/her system supports.

● **Step 6**
Colorized prompts

The use of colorized prompts requires that the user's hardware and software have color capability. During the initial logon procedure, if you do not see the blinking red block on the screen during the interaction for graphics setup, type "N" (CR) in response to "Do you want colorized prompts ([Y],N)?"

(Please note that [Y]es is the default. If you make a mistake, the command line will become unreadable, showing numbers and symbols embedded within command options. To correct the problem, type "N" at the next three prompts; press (CR) when you reach the prompt at the Bulletin Menu; and type "N" at the next prompt about checking conference mail. At this point you should be at the MAIN MENU. At the next prompts, type "U" for [U]tilities; type "G" for [G]raphics; type "N" to select "no GRAPHICS for text files and menus"; then select "N" at the prompt "Do you want colorized prompts?" To exit the UTILITIES MENU, select [Q]uit, then [M] to access the MAIN MENU.)

- **Step 7**
  File transfer protocol

The caller is prompted to choose a default file transfer protocol. The protocol is the parameter settings necessary to transfer files between the "host" (ALF) and the caller. A list of available protocols, with brief explanations, follows.

File transfer protocols enable computer systems to exchange files, regardless of the type of hardware or communication software being used. If the default protocol is chosen, it automatically will be invoked during **all** file transfers (uploading or downloading). It is recommended that you choose N)one (no default). ALF will then list the protocol options and prompt you to select the protocol desired each time you upload or download a file. Consult your communication software documentation for specific protocol options and instructions. Refer to Chapter 6 for more information on file transfer protocols.

```
Default Protocol

A)scii
B)atch Ymodem (DSZ)
C)rc Xmodem
K)ermit
X)modem
Y)modem (1K Xmodem)
W)indowed Xmodem
Z)modem (Batch)
N)one - Cancel

Select Protocol? N
Protocol:  None-cancel
```

- **Step 8**
  TurboKey

ALF will next ask for your preference in using "TurboKeys." The TurboKey option enables the system to process a 1-character command, for example "Y" for yes, without waiting for the carriage return. Enter your preference at the prompt "Want TurboKeys (Y/[N])?"

- **Step 9**
  Welcome

The caller is now granted access to ALF, having successfully completed the registration procedure.

```
Logging JANE DOE

RBBS-PC 17.3B Node 1, Operating at 2400 BAUD,N,8,1
```

Once logged on, ALF's "welcome" screen(s) displays news about recent items of general interest. Example:

Food for Thought:
"Don't find fault. Find a remedy." — Henry Ford

See Bullet 21 for exciting volunteer opportunities at NAL

Future Logon Shortcut: After completing the initial registration logon procedure (steps 2-9), future logons will be much simpler: Enter your first name, last name and password (each separated by a space) at the first prompt:

What is your FIRST Name? Jane Doe Password (CR)

JANE, welcome back!

Checking Users ...

Granted access level 5

Logging JANE DOE
RBBS-PC 17.3B Node 1, operating at 2400 BAUD,N,8,1

The caller is granted access to ALF. The system recognizes the caller as a registered user and lists the caller's usage statistics:

Times on: 123	Last was: 06-11-91 10:45
Files Downloaded: 24	Files Uploaded: 0

● **Step 10**
  New items
The system checks for new files, bulletins, new messages (added since the last logon) on the Main board and messages in any conferences the caller has joined. At each prompt, the caller may choose "N" to continue or "Y" to 1) list new files with the option to download them, 2) to read new bulletins, 3) to read messages on the Main board, or 4) to list new messages in previously-joined conferences. (Note that Y)es is the default answer to all prompts about new material.)

```
1 NEW file(s) since last on
Review new files to download ([Y],N)! n

Checking new bulletins...
12 NEW BULLETIN(S) since last call:  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
READ ALL new bulletins ([Y],N)? n

Checking messages in MAIN...
Mail for YOU (* = Private)
78 *87 *91 94
Mail you left
26 56 68

Please kill old/unneeded messages

Check conferences for mail ([Y],N)? y
```

NOTE: First-time callers should consider answering "N" to the "new bulletins" prompt as all bulletins will be "new" bulletins. It is recommended that first-time callers print a copy of the bulletin list to use as a reference for information sources on NAL or other ALF lists. To read only selected bulletins from the Bulletin Menu, enter "B" at the MAIN MENU, then type the Bulletin number to access a specific bulletin.

For more information on sending or receiving mail see *Chapter 3: Messaging*.

● **Step 11 Status line**   ALF then posts the status of messages and the time the caller has remaining to use ALF. Callers are allotted 75 minutes of connect time each day.

TIP: If you need additional time, select [U]tilities from the MAIN MENU, then P)assword Change before your session time runs out. Change your password, and ALF will allot an additional 75 minutes of connect time. You may change your password no more than 3 times per day.

```
RBBS-PC 17.3B Node 1
Caller # 22026 # active msgs: 216  Next msg # 1235  Last msg
read: 1220

35 min left
```

- **Step 12**
  Main Menu
  Commands

The board's MAIN MENU, shown below, lists the commands available in the main message system on ALF. To select an option, type the appropriate command letter and press (CR) (if turbokey is not activated). Command letters also are displayed on the MAIN command line at the bottom of the screen.

ALF's major features include Messaging, Bulletins, Conferencing, and File Transfer. These features are described in the remaining chapters of this guide. See Appendices A and B for explanation of other MAIN MENU commands.

———*> RBBS-PC MAIN MENU <*———

MAIL	SYSTEM	UTILITIES	ELSEWHERE
[E]nter Messages	[A]nswer Questions	[H]elp (or ?)	[D]oors
[K]ill Messages	[B]ulletins	[J]oin Conferences	[F]iles
[P]ersonal Mail	[C]omment to Sysop	[V]iew Conf. Mail	[G]oodbye
[R]ead Messages	[I]nitial Welcome	[X]pert on/off	[Q]uit
[S]can Messages	[O]perator Page	[U]tilities	
[T]opic of Msgs	[W]ho's on		[*]Library

* = unavailable

- -

Current time: 09:48 AM   Minutes remaining: 65   Security: 5

- -

65 min left

MAIN command ?,A,B,C,D,E,F,H,I,J,K,O,P,Q,R,S,T,U,V,W,X!

Chapter 3: Messaging

Messages may be entered on the main board or in appropriate conferences which the user has joined. ALF assigns each message a number and stores the message for later reply by the recipient(s), or other users. **Please [K]ill (delete) outdated messages on a regular basis.**

Preparing messages

Command: [E]nter Messages
Type "E" at the MAIN MENU prompt or Conference/Subboard MAIN MENU prompt.

Function: Allows caller to send messages to [A]ll ALF participants (public), to the S)YSOP, or to an individual.

The system will ask to whom you wish to send your message. Type "A" or press (CR) to send the message to [A]ll ALF users, enter "S" to address it to the SYSOP, or type a user's name if the message is directed to a specific individual.

Next, type the message subject, limiting the subject entry to 25 characters. Press (CR). (Subject lines are stored as all upper case text.) The message line-number prompt will appear to the left of the first line of text. Enter your messsage (60 line maximum). Press (CR) twice to end the message. You may now make changes to the message (See Editing Messages) or save and send the message (See Sending Messages).

Within a message, carriage returns are added automatically by the system when the end of a line is reached. Words that overlap the right margin will be moved to the next line.

To activate the editor, enter a (CR) at the **beginning** of a line. Because the editor is entered when a (CR) is entered on a blank line, **double-spacing** in a message or between paragraphs **requires the entry of an ASCII character such as a "." or spacebar (blank space) at the first position of each blank line desired.**

Many communication software programs contain commands to send blank characters to preserve blank lines when uploading pre-typed text files as messages. Pre-typed messages may be entered into ALF by using your communications software program's "send" command with the file of interest specified. See "Sending test files as messages" on page 15.

Editing messages

To activate the editor, enter a (CR) at the **beginning** of a line. The sender may edit a message **before** it is saved. Options are listed on the "Edit Sub-function" command line: A, C, D, E, I, L, M, R, S, ? (See box below).

> ### Editor Commands
>
> A . . . . Abort without saving message.
> C . . . . Continue. Enter more lines of message.
> D . . . . Delete line(s) of message.
> E . . . . Edit a line of the message.
> I . . . . Insert line(s) into the message.
> L . . . . List entire message.
> M . . . Set the right margin.
> R . . . . Revise subject of message.
> S . . . . Save and Send the message.
>
> ? . . . . Lists online "Editing Messages Help" screen.
>
> See the B)ulletin list on ALF for a bullet which discusses RBBS message commands in greater detail.

● **Examples:**

Select E)dit at the command line (after typing the message and hitting (CR) twice). Type the number of the line you wish to correct. At the "Search for ?" prompt, type the word(s) or character string you wish to change and press (CR). At the "And replace by?" prompt, type the correct word(s) or character string.

Choose C)ontinue to add text to the end of the message. Select I)nsert to add lines within the text, specifying where to add lines when prompted. To delete lines, select D)elete and specify the line number(s) you wish to remove.

Sending messages

Select L)ist if you wish to review the message. Select S)ave to send the message. ALF will prompt the sender with "Make message p[U]blic, p(R)ivate, (P)assword protected, (H)elp." Type "U", "R", or "P"; or type "H" to read the "Message Protection Help" screen. The message protection options are:

U (pUblic):   Message can be read by anyone, but it can only be killed (deleted) by sender, addressee, or the SYSOP.

R (pRivate): Message can be read only by the sender, the addressee, or the SYSOP. Any of these may K)ill private messages.

P (Password): Message can be read and killed only by persons who can give the password that you assign to the message, and by the SYSOP.

Sending text files as messages

You may send a pre-composed message or text file as a message or as part of a message. Before sending the text file, you must make sure that **1)** the margins are less than or equal to 0 and 72; **2)** the message length is less than or equal to 60 lines **or** break the file into parts and send each part as a separate message; and **3)** blank lines (double spacing) may be added by typing a space, ".", or other character in column one **before** the carriage return on each blank line desired. This is necessary because a carriage return in column one causes ALF to enter the edit mode. Your communications software may have a command which will add the necessary blank space before carriage returns on blank lines. For example, in CrossTalk, use the "BLank" command to automatically enter a space (ASCII character 020) before each carriage return found in column one when a file is "sent."

To send the pre-composed message, select E)nter Messages, then type the name of the receiver, the subject, and any text, if needed, that you want to precede the message. At the message's line number prompt, instruct your communications software to send (ASCII upload) the desired pre-composed text file. For example, in CrossTalk, press Escape. Then type "SEnd filename.ext" on the CrossTalk command line.

Reading messages

The caller may read messages left on the main board, or join a conference or subboard to read conference mail. The following commands may be entered at the MAIN MENU on the main board, in conferences, or in subboards.

● **Commands**

R Allows caller to [R]ead both public messages and personal mail sent by other callers.

P Checks messages on the main board (or in the conference/subboard to which you are connected) and lists message number(s) of any [P]ersonal mail for you. Public mail (sent to A)ll) is **not** listed.

S [S]cans messages on the main board (or in the conference/subboard to which you are connected), and lists the date, message number, sender, addressee, and subject of available messages.

T   Lists the [T]opics (subject) and message numbers of available messages.

V   [V]iew conference mail. Lists all subboards/conferences which you have joined and the number of new messages in each. Alerts the caller if any of these messages are addressed to him/her. The caller also is given the option to J)oin a conference to read messages.

To read a specific message, type the message number at the READ prompt. The system assigns numbers to messages consecutively; thus, the messages entered most recently are assigned the highest numbers. After you have entered one of the above commands, ALF displays the range of available message numbers, followed by additional messaging commands to specify which messages you are interested in.

Msg # 1-1245   (H)elp, S)ince, L)ast, T)o, F)rom, M)ine, text, [Q]uit)

● **Range and Filter Options**

To read selected messages, the caller may specify a "range," and/or a "filter" at the READ prompt. The range tells ALF what message numbers you wish to read. A filter command allows a caller to specify message types, or narrow messages within a requested range (e.g., only messages addressed **to the caller**). Read commands may contain many combinations of range and filter sequences.

Range options:

S (or *)   Read forward, starting from the highest numbered message you read during this, or a previous, session.

n-   Read backward from message number n.
Example: "R 10-" will allow you to read messages numbers 1 through 10 beginning with message 10.

n +   Read forward from message number n.
Example: "R 100 + " will allow the caller to read message number 100 and each message after it.

Filter options:

F   Read only mail FROM you.

T   Read mail addressed TO you.

L   Start with the LAST (most recent) message, and read each message previous to it in reverse order.

M   Read mail addressed to you or sent by you.

"text"   Read only messages with specified "text" in them. ALF searches the To/From and Subject fields as well as the body of all messages for the text string entered at the READ prompt. After entry of a "text" string and a carriage return, the user is prompted for a Range command (L)ast, S)ince, message number or range of numbers) within which to search for the specified "text." (See range options above.)

Range and Filter Examples

Read commands may be "stacked" (entered in groups of two or more). Examples of commands which may be entered at the READ prompt are:

R S   Read ALL messages left on the board since the last time you read messages.

R T 1200+   Read messages numbered 1200 and above that are addressed TO you.

R "board" 1200- Read messages numbered 1200 or below that contain the word "board" as part of the text, or in the To, From or Subject fields.

R 100 250 S   Read message number 100, then number 250, then ALL NEW messages left on the board since the last time you read messages.

● **"More"**
  Prompt

ALF displays the "More" prompt after a message is read. The caller may then enter one of the following commands:

Y or (CR)	Continue to read/scan messages.
N	Stop reading messages; return to last prompt.
C	Read all or remaining messages given in read command **continuously** (i.e., the system will scroll all remaining messages without pausing).
A	Abort; return to MAIN menu.
H	View message Help screen.
R	Reply to current message.
T	Thread (read other messages with the same Subject, followed by a " +/-" prompt to thread forward or backward).
=	Repeat current message.
+	Switch forward (read messages in ascending order).
-	Switch backward (read messages in descending order).
K	Kill (erase) current message before continuing.
!	Show previous command line.
F)wd	Allows the sender to forward (send a copy of) current message to an additional caller.

Chapter 4: Bulletins

Bulletins are ASCII text files which may be read online and contain current information about a variety of topics. Both the main board and some of the conferences contain bulletins. Conferences with bulletins are called "Subboards" at the command line. Conference bulletins may contain publication lists, meeting announcements, directories, and other types of information related to the conference's subject matter. Bulletins on the main board offer general information including contacts, instructions for using ALF, statements about NAL policies and procedures for various services, recent publication lists, training schedules, a calendar of agricultural events, project and product descriptions, etc.

New Bulletins

At logon, ALF lists the Bullet number(s) of those bulletin(s) added or updated since your last logon to the main board. At this prompt, the caller may choose to read new bulletins by entering "Y" or hitting the carriage return.

Reading Bulletins

To read a bulletin from the ALF's MAIN MENU or from a conference MAIN MENU, type "B". To read specific conference bulletins, the caller must first [J]oin that subboard or conference. ALF will display the bulletin menu which lists Bullet number(s), subjects and file date. Type the number of the bulletin you wish to read.

TIP: If you already know the bulletin number, to bypass the bulletin menu type "B" followed by a space and the bulletin number (e.g., "B 3"). To read multiple bulletins, type "B" followed by a space and the bulletin number followed by a space and the second bulletin number. For example, type "B 3 7" to read bulletins 3 and 7.

Capture-to-disk Option

MAIN system Bulletins **cannot** be downloaded; however, they may be captured to disk using your communication software's capture feature.

For example, in CrossTalk, press the Escape key and type "ca on" at the command line. Enter "B 3" at ALF's main command line. The bulletin will scroll by on the screen. (Choose C)ont at the "More?" prompt for uninterrupted scrolling.) To turn the capture feature off, press the Escape key and type "ca off" at the CrossTalk command line. CrossTalk will then ask you to enter a filename you wish to assign to the captured text. If no path is specified, the file will be saved to your computer's CrossTalk subdirectory.

Subboard Bulletins

In **subboards**, bulletins **can** be downloaded using the subboard name characters plus "BUL" plus the bulletin number as the filename.

For example, to download the Water Quality Information Network (WIN) subboard bulletin number 3, [D]ownload the file "WINBUL3". See Chapter 6 for additional instructions on downloading. Conference coordinators also may give bulletin download instructions on their subboard welcome screen or in their bulletin list.

Chapter 5: Conferencing

Conferencing allows callers to participate in special interest group discussions. Conferences may be labeled either as "subboards" or "conferences." Subboards have the same capabilities and features as the Main Board (bulletins, file transfer, messaging, etc.); conferences do **not** have separate welcome screens or bulletin sets. Topics covered in conference or subboard files and messages or in subboard bulletins relate to the specific subject focus of the conference or subboard.

Joining a conference or subboard

To [J]oin a conference or subboard, type "J" at the MAIN MENU prompt. ALF will list conference/subboard options, the subject focus, and the contact person for each conference. Most conferences are open to the public, although there may be "private" conferences from time to time. At the prompt, type the name of the conference you wish to join.

● **Example**

> What conference, L)ist, M)ain ([ENTER] quits)? **awf**
> Checking Users . . .
> Welcome to AWF Conference

When a caller joins a conference, the active conference (or subboard) name will appear to the left of the screen directly above the menu command line. (E.g., AWF Subboard: 35 min left)

To J)oin a different conference, type "J". To exit a conference, select Q)uit, then choose C)onference to quit the conference and rejoin the Main Board or choose S)ession to log off ALF. The caller also may select J)oin, then choose M)ain to rejoin the main board.

> AWF Subboard
> FILE command ?,D,G,H,L,N,P,Q,S,U,V,X! **q**
> QUIT C)onference, S)ession or to section F)ile, [M]ain, U)til? **c**
> Rejoining Main

● **ALF**
  conferences

Currently, ALF has 15 conferences:

Name	Description of Conference Focus
AFS	Alternative Farming Systems (LISA, etc.)
AGCD	CD-ROM User's Forum for AGRICOLA
AGRAD	USDA Graduate School-Online Education
AGRICOL	Database User's Group for AGRICOLA
AWF	Animal Welfare User's Forum
BT	Biotechnology User's Forum
PROCITE	Pro-Cite Software User's Group
PTL	Publications Tradepost for Libraries
RIC	Rural Information Center (RIC) and RIC Health Service (RICHS) User Forum
RUSB	NAL Reference and User Services Branch
SEEDS	Seed law, research, registration, etc.
SYSCORN	"The SYSOP's Corner"
US	Microcomputer User Support
USAIN	United States Agricultural Information Network Forum for USAIN members, librarians, or other information professionals
WIN	Water Quality Information Network

Some subboards may have sub-level conferences within them. SORH (State Offices of Rural Health) is a conference/subboard available from within the RIC subboard. To see if other conferences are attached to a subboard, read the conference's welcome screen, or select the J)oin command from the Conference/Subboard Main Menu screen.

● **Expert Mode**
  The caller will **not** see a list of conferences if he/she enters the Conference System while in the Expert Mode. Type "L" to see the conference list. (Select "X" at the menu to toggle between novice (menus) and expert (no menus) modes.)

Chapter 6: File Transfer (Uploading/Downloading)

The [F]iles command (type "F" at the MAIN MENU to access the FILE MENU) allows files to be transferred between ALF (the "host") and the caller's computer system. **Uploading** refers to sending a file to ALF. **Downloading** is when the caller receives a file from ALF.

The file transfer process (described in the following pages) involves three steps:

● **Step 1** Entering the ALF **BBS command** for either uploading or downloading.

● **Step 2** Selecting the **file transfer protocol**, if, as recommended, no default protocol was chosen at initial registration. If a default has been selected, this step is unnecessary.

● **Step 3** Giving your **communications software the command** to either send (upload) or receive (download) a file.

Step 1:
ALF BBS
Commands

To instruct ALF to transfer a file, enter "F" for [F]iles from the MAIN MENU, or from a conference, or from the command prompt following entry of a Q)uit command. ALF enters the Files Subsystem and displays the FILE MENU (shown below).

```
- - - * > > > RBBC-PC FILE MENU < < < * - - -

TRANSFER            INFORMATION          UTILITIES            ELSEWHERE

[D]ownload file     [L]ist files         [H]elp (or ?)        [G]oodbye
[P]ersonal dwnld    [N]ew files          [X]pert on/off       [Q]uit
[U]pload file       [S]earch files
                    [V]iew archives       * = unavailable

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Current time: 1:54 PM   Minutes remaining: 30

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

FILE command < ?,D,G,H,L,N,P,Q,S,U,V,X >!
```

● File names   To determine the name(s) of the file(s) you wish to download, several FILE MENU options are available:

[L]ist files   Type "L". Then select U)pload to list recently-uploaded files; or select A)ll to see all files available in all subdirectories; or type the UPPERCASE part of the subdirectory name to list the files available in a specific subdirectory.

[N]ew files   Type "N". Enter a date when prompted. ALF will list all files uploaded since that date.

[S]earch files   Type "S". Enter a word or a string of text. ALF will list all available filenames which contain this text in either the filename or in the file description field. DOS Wildcards also may be used to search (in filenames and extensions only). **For example**, to search for versions of **key**word index files type "key*.*" at the [S]earch prompt.

● Downloading files: Once you know the name of the file you wish to download, select [D]ownload from the FILE MENU.

ALF will respond "Download what file(s)?" Type the filename (including the extension). ALF will then list the file size in blocks and bytes, and the approximate amount of time it will take to transfer the file to your computer. If the file is not found, you will be asked to enter a correct filename.

ALF will prompt you to select a transfer protocol at this time **only if you set the default protocol to "NONE" when you registered.** (If a default protocol has been selected, ALF will prepare to send the file using that protocol.) Enter the appropriate file transfer protocol at the prompt. (See Step Two: File Transfer Protocol.)

When ALF prompts you that it is ready to send the file, type the key sequence(s) required for the communications software commands that your system requires for the selected protocol (e.g., in CrossTalk, press escape to access the command line). Then enter the appropriate communications software command for downloading files. (See Step Three: Software Commands.)

● Uploading files: Current ALF policy requires that users who wish to upload files contact the SYSOP, via the ALF message system or by voice telephone, to discuss the nature and purposes of the uploaded files. **Upload security** will be given to requestors who have noncopyrighted, agriculture-related files copyrighted to share with other users.

Choose [U]pload from the FILE MENU. In response to the prompt "Name file(s) to upload?" type the name of the file you wish to transfer to ALF. If no file is found on the system with the same name, ALF will indicate how much disk space is free on the upload disk. Compare this with your file's size to make sure ALF has enough disk space to receive the file.

ALF will prompt you to enter a transfer protocol at this time **only if you set the default protocol to "NONE" when you registered.** (See Step 2: File Transfer Protocol.)

When ALF prompts you that it is ready to receive the file, type the key sequence or commands that your system and communications software require for the selected protocol (e.g, in CrossTalk, press escape to access the command line). Then type the appropriate communications software command for downloading or receiving files. (See Step 3: Software Commands.)

Step 2: File Transfer Protocol

Before files may be transferred, the caller must set the file transfer protocol. When you first register for ALF, the system asks you to specify a default setting for file transfer protocol. If you selected an option **other than** N)one, the selected protocol will be used for each requested transfer. **Once a default protocol has been selected, it does not need to be specified for each file transfer.**

The file transfer protocol is a set of procedures used by your communications software and the bulletin board software to transmit, receive and sometimes verify the data being transferred. The selected protocol determines speed, block size, start/end sequences, and may verify that the data received by one computer is identical to the data sent by the other. If errors are detected, **non-ASCII protocols** instruct the sending computer to send the data again. The caller must select a file transfer protocol on ALF to match a protocol supported by his/her communications software. (Refer to your software manual to determine which protocol(s) it will accept.)

Data can be transferred either in ASCII (if the file to be transferred is an ASCII, text only, file) or by using an error-checking file transfer protocol (such as XMODEM) for non-ASCII files or compressed files. Non-ASCII protocols allow command sequences (in program files) and offer the advantage of block checks to assure that the data transferred contains no errors.

ALF currently supports **ASCII**, **Xmodem**, **CRC-Xmodem**, **Ymodem**, **Zmodem**, and **Kermit**.

**Step 3:
Software
Commands**

Once you have given ALF the proper bbs commands, you must then instruct your communications software to transfer the file. At your communication software's command line, enter the command to transmit your file to ALF, or to save or capture the incoming file from ALF, using the same protocol you selected or preset on ALF.

The command for uploading is often called **Send** or **Transmit**. For downloading, the command may be called **Receive**. Check your software manual for the name and format of the commands your program uses.

Examples: If you are using Xmodem and the CrossTalk XVI Data Communications Software System, the commands are shown below:

**Example 1
Downloading**: To receive a file from ALF, press escape to access the CrossTalk command line. Type "**RX filename.ext**". ALF will show a summary message of the transfer progress, tell you when the transfer is complete, and indicate that the download is successful. The downloaded file now resides in your computer's CrossTalk subdirectory. (Another path may be specified, if desired, before the filename in the Receive or CApture command, e.g.,"**RX C:\WP\filename.ext**".)

**Example 2
Uploading**: To send a file to ALF, press escape to access the CrossTalk command line. Type "**XX filename.ext**". (If using earlier versions of the Xtalk software, the file **must** be in your CrossTalk subdirectory so that it can be transferred to ALF.) A summary message will show you the progress of the transfer, tell you when the transfer is finished, and indicate that the upload is successful. At the ALF prompt, type in a brief description of the uploaded file. Additional lines for descriptive text are available if needed.

**Compressed
(ZIPped)
files**

ALF utilizes a shareware program to compress and combine (ZIP) some of the larger files available on ALF. Compressed files have ".ZIP" as a file extension.

PKWare's PKZIP shareware package may be downloaded from ALF. This package contains the ZIP (compression) and UNZIP (decompression) programs along with documentation for each. Your one-time use of PKZIP is without charge. Continued use requires registration of the program. Consult the PKZIP documentation for details.

Files are compressed in size to speed and simplify file transmission over phone lines. ZIPped files download and upload faster than uncompressed files. Several files also may be combined into one file and compressed in size at the same time.

Compressed files must be restored to their original form (UNZIPped) in order to function properly.

Additional information on file compression and on using the program files is listed in Bullet 4 (type "B 4" at the MAIN MENU). [H]elp files on file compression also are available (type "H", then "ZIP" at the MAIN MENU).

```
– – –*>   RBBS-PC  UTILITIES MENU   <*– – –

DISPLAY              INFORMATION          SYSTEM               ELSEWHERE
[E]cho pref          [H]elp (or ?)        [B]aud Rate Change   [Q]uit
[G]raphics           [R]ead Profile       [C]lock Time-Date
[L]ines/Page         [S]tatistics         [F]ile Protocol
[M]essage margin     [U]ser log           [P]assword Change
*  = unavailable                          [T]oggles

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
                     Current time: 09:48 AM    Minutes remaining: 64
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

 64 min left
UTIL command ?,B,C,E,F,G,H,L,M,P,Q,R,S,T,U,X! q
QUIT C)onference, S)ession or to section F)ile, [M]ain, U)til! m
```

Type "U" from the MAIN MENU to access the Utilities Menu. Selecting commands from this menu will allow you to customize your connection to ALF to meet your system's requirements and your personal preferences.

An explanation of Utilities commands are listed in Appendices A and B.

Chapter 8: Troubleshooting

Problem: Printing overstrikes on the "More" prompt line or on printed output of session.

Solution: This problem can be corrected by use of the N)ulls command. [T]oggle N)ulls on in the [U]tilities subsection. From the MAIN MENU, enter "U" for [U]tilities; then "T" for [T]oggles; then "N" for N)ulls. Exit by entering a (CR); then [Q]uit to [M]ain.

Problem: Daily connect time allotted is insufficient for needed use of ALF.

Solution: Password change may be used to gain additional time. Before your allotted time is used up, select [U]tilities from the MAIN MENU. Choose [P]assword Change and enter a new password. ALF will allot you an additional 75 minutes of connect time. You are allowed three password changes per day.

Problem: Command prompt line is illegible, with characters or symbols (e.g., [00;38] [00;32] etc.) embedded within command options.

Solution: You may have selected the option for colorized prompts which requires that your hardware and software have color capability. Reset graphics and high-lighting. Select [U]tilities, then select G)raphics. Choose N)one for graphics desired, then N)o when prompted for "Colorized Prompts?". Exit by entering Q)uit at the [U]tilities command prompt line, then select [M]ain (the default) or carriage return to return to the MAIN MENU. (See page 8, step 6.)

Problem: File transfer protocol problems.

Solution: If you have selected a file transfer protocol default which will not work with your communications software, select [U]tilities, then select F)ile transfer and choose N)one for the default protocol. You will now see a protocol options menu each time you transfer a file. Refer to your communications software's manual to determine which protocols are compatible with your software.

Problem: Edit Mode entered when a pre-typed file is sent as part (or all) of a message.

Solution: Add a space, a period ("."), or any other character **before** the carriage return on blank lines. Without a character before the carriage return, the carriage return alone signals ALF to enter the Edit Mode.

APPENDIX A: ALF Menus

MAIN MENU Commands

Command	Function
[A]nswer Questions	Answer questions on multiple topics
[B]ulletins	Lists and gives option to read bulletins on Main Board
[C]omment for SYSOP	Leave private message for ALF's Systems Operator
[D]oors	Run a program from RBBS-PC (*not available)
[E]nter Messages	Send mail to other callers
[F]iles	Access FILES MENU
[G]oodbye	Log off ALF
[H]elp (or ?)	Help for any command, section, topic
[I]nitial Welcome	Repeat ALF's log-on welcome message
[J]oin Conferences	Join special interest group discussions (conferences or subboards with files, messages, etc.)
[K]ill Messages	Delete a message you previously entered
[O]perator Page	Page SYSOP
[Q]uit	Go elsewhere in system (e.g., to FILES, to UTILITIES, or log off ALF)
[P]ersonal Mail	Access messages addressed to you
[R]ead Messages	Select message(s) to read
[S]can Messages	View message topics, dates, senders
[T]opic of Msgs	Scans messages for specified topics, then lists message numbers
[U]tilities	Access UTILITIES MENU
[V]iew Conf. Mail	Scan conferences or subboards for mail
[W]ho's on	List callers on ALF at this time
[X]pert on/off	Toggle between novice mode (menus) and expert mode (no menus)

FILE MENU Commands

Command	Function
[D]ownload file	Transfer a file from ALF to your computer
[G]oodbye	Log off ALF (Disconnect)
[H]elp (or ?)	Show help screens for any command, section, or topic
[L]ist files	List directories (categories) of files available for download
[N]ew files	List files posted since specified date
[P]ersonal download	Download files addressed to you personally
[Q]uit	Go elsewhere in system (e.g., to MAIN, to UTILITIES, or log off ALF)
[S]earch files	Locate files with specified text in filename or file description
[U]pload file	Transfer a file from your computer to ALF
[V]iew archives	View contents (filenames) of a compressed file
[X]pert on/off	Toggle between novice (menus) and expert (no menus)

UTILITIES MENU Commands

Command	Function
[B]aud Rate Change	Switch baud rate (1200, 2400, 9600)
[C]lock Time-Date	Shows time, date, and elapsed time of call
[E]cho preference	Toggle to set ALF or caller's software to echo what is typed
[F]ile Protocol	Set default file transfer protocol (unless you override)
[G]raphics	Options are: None, ASCII (IBM PC display), or Color/music (ANSI)
[H]elp (or ?)	Show help screens for any command, section, or topic
[L]ines per page	Set number of lines shown before ALF pauses
[M]essage margin	Set right/left margins for messages
[P]assword Change	Change password for log on protection
[Q]uit	Go elsewhere in system (e.g., to MAIN, to FILES, or to log off ALF)
[R]ead Profile	List your current settings, then use [T]oggles to modify settings
[S]tatistics	Lists caller number and available messages as well as data on system usage
[T]oggles	Select "T", then type the appropriate letter to turn the following options on or off:
A	Autodownload (if your software can support it)
B	Bulletins (read only new bulletins at logon)
C	Case (upper only, or lower and upper)
F	File access (list new files at logon)
H	Hilite (if your software and hardware can support it)
L	Line feeds (add line feed after each line sent)
N	Nulls (time delay for printing terminals)
T	Turbokey (act immediately on 1-key input)
X	Switch between novice (menus) and expert (no menus)
!	Bell (end each prompt for an answer with a beep)
[U]serlog	Lists recent callers or all users of ALF

APPENDIX B: ALF Menu Commands

**General
[H]elp**

Global Command. The "Help" system contains in-depth information about ALF commands, menus, and special topics.

To access online help files, type "H" or "?" from any menu. ALF will respond "Help with what Command (or Topic name) ([ENTER] quits)?" Then, enter one of the following **topics** for general help:

Topic	Covers
FILE	General help with file section commands
MAIN	General help with main section commands
UTIL	General help with utility section commands
LIBR	General help with library section commands
ZIP	What ZIPed files are and how to use them
JUMP	How to use ALF's "jump" option
SMARTEXT	A demo of ALF's "Smart Text" feature
RBBS-PC	How to get a copy of RBBS-PC for your own use

For information on how to use any ALF **command**, enter the command letter at the "Help" prompt, or at the main menu prompt enter "Help" followed by a space followed by the command letter. For example, to get help with the X command (eXpert toggle), enter "X" at the "Help" prompt, or enter "Help X" or "H X" at the Main Menu prompt.

If the command you need help with is **not** in the section of ALF you are currently using (e.g., Main, Utilities, or Files), you may not get the help you want. To specify the section, use the first letter of the section name and the command you want help with. For example, to get help with the Utilities command G (graphics), enter "Help UG". Entering just "Help G" from another section will give you help with the Goodbye command.

The remainder of this section describes selected commands.

**[B]aud Rate
Change**

Utilities Menu Command. This command allows you to increase your modem speed. Your communications software program must support this change.

[B]ulletins   **Main Menu Command.** Bulletins are ASCII text files which may be read online or captured to disk; some also may be downloaded (Refer to Chapter 4). ALF will list the Bullet Numbers and topics of bulletins on the Main Board. Type the number of the bulletin you wish to read. You must first join a conference in order to read Conference Bulletins.

[C]lock
Time-Date   **Utilities Menu Command.** This command displays the current time, and how much time remaining in your ALF session. ALF restricts the amount of time you can stay on the system so that other callers have a chance to use the system.

A quick reminder of your remaining usage time on ALF is the "xx minutes left" message that precedes the command prompt on ALF.

[C]omment
to SYSOP   **Main Menu Command.** This command will allow you to send a brief message to the SYSOP. Only the SYSOP may read messages entered by the "C" command. However, your ideas, questions, etc. are much easier for the SYSOP to reply to if they are sent as regular messages. If you want a reply, use the E)nter message command instead, typing "S" at the "To:" prompt.

Press [Enter] on a blank line when you finish typing your comment to bring up the editor command line. You must issue the S)ave command to send your comment to the SYSOP.

RBBS-PC provides you with two additional ways of contacting the SYSOP. You can use the E)nter message command to leave a message or you can page the SYSOP by using the O)perator command.

[D]ownload
File   **File Menu Command.** This command is used to transfer files from ALF to your computer. Use the L)ist, N)ew, and S)earch commands to identify files you would like to download. (See *Chapter 6: File Transfer*.)

[E]cho   **Utilities Menu Command.** This command lets you specify which computer will "echo" what you type. When you type on your keyboard, you will not see the keystrokes on your screen unless one of the computers echoes it back to you. Options for echo are: 1) C)aller's software. Your communications software will echo your keystrokes to your screen. This will make your keystrokes appear faster, since they do not have to be processed by ALF and sent back to you. 2) R)BBS-PC. ALF will echo your keystrokes back to you. This is the default mode for ALF. The

advantage to this mode is that you can be sure that what you have typed is what ALF received, since it echos back to you. 3) I)ntermediate network. A data network (e.g., Compuserve, DIALCOM, TELENET, etc.) does the echoing, and neither ALF nor the caller's software need echo the characters back to the keyboard as they are typed in. When there is significant network delay, this selection may be useful.

[E]nter Messages

Main Menu Command. This command allows the caller to send mail to other ALF users. Messages may be directed to all users or to a specific individual. See Chapter 3 for an explanation of how to use this command.

[F]ile protocol

Utilities Menu Command. ALF allows you to select a default file transfer protocol. ALF will use the selected protocol for all uploads and downloads unless you specify a protocol when uploading/downloading.

You may not want to have a default transfer protocol. If you transfer short text files as well as longer and/or program files, you may want to use a variety of protocols. Select the N)one option, and ALF will ask for your preferred protocol **before each** file transfer.

The protocol you want ALF to use also must be used by your communications package. Protocols available in ALF include ASCII (no error checking), Xmodem, CRC-Xmodem, Ymodem, Zmodem, and Kermit. Xmodem is the most widely supported, but Ymodem and Zmodem are faster.

You can override the default by specifying the protocol on the same command line as D)ownload or U)pload. E.g., "D FILE.TXT X" downloads the file "FILE.TXT" in Xmodem no matter what the default protocol is.

[F]iles System

Main Menu Command. This command takes the caller to the Files System. Files are collections of text, programs, graphics, data bases, and other types of information stored in digital form. The Files System allows files to be transferred between the callers computer and ALF. Refer to Chapter 6 for specific instructions for uploading and downloading files.

[G]oodbye

Main Menu and File Menu Command. Use this command to conclude your ALF session and "hang up" your phone. Use the [Q]uit option to move between systems (e.g., Conference, Utilities, Files) within ALF.

[G]raphics **Utilities Menu Command.** ALF allows you to specify: 1) If you want graphics or color display; 2) If you want highlighted prompts (colorized); and 3) The color used for highlighted prompts.

If you only want to see text, with no graphic characters or color, specify NONE for graphics and NO highlighting.

[I]nitial Welcome **Main Menu Command.** This command redisplays the welcome screen which is shown when you first log onto ALF.

[J]oin Conference **Main Menu Command.** This command provides access to ALF's Conferences and Subboards. A Conference is a separate message area, usually focused on a single topic. A Subboard is an entire BBS within ALF, with its own message base, file catalogs, and Subboard SYSOP. The J)oin command works the same for both Conferences and Subboards.

Enter "J" followed by a space and the conference name to go directly from the Main Menu into a conference. E.g., type "J AGRICOL" to join the AGRICOLA conference.

Refer to *Chapter 5: Conferencing* for specific information about joining conferences or subboards and for a list of conferences and subboards available on ALF.

Jump Option **Scrolling Option.** When ALF sends information to your screen, it stops after each page to give you time to read before continuing. When ALF pauses in the middle of a file, you may see a prompt such as:

Press "Y" to display the next page of the file.
Press "N" to stop the display of **this** file, and continue with the next file (if you have selected to see several files).
Press "C" to start a **Continuous** display without further pause. (Press CTRL-S (hold down control key and press "S") to pause, CTRL-Q to continue, or CTRL-X to stop a continuous display.)
Press "A" to **Abort** this and ALL further displays, and return to the current menu.

The J)ump command allows you to skip ahead in the file being displayed. For example, you previously read an ALF bulletin about ALF policies. You want to re-read the piece which says, "Uploading is restricted to

those who have been given an upload security level by the SYSOP."

When you re-read the bulletin, ALF will stop after the first page and display a "more" prompt. Press "J" and ALF responds: "Jump to what text?". The response at this point depends on what you are looking for. In the example above, you could type "security level" to access that statement within the bulletin. ALF will scan forward through the file and find the first line which contains the words "security level." It will highlight the text, if you have color and highlighting turned on, and display the file from that point down.

If the first text found is not the place you want to be in the file, you can jump again when ALF reaches the next "more" prompt:

"More [Y]es,N)o,C)ont,A)bort,J)ump,R)ejump = SECURITY LEVEL?"

Enter "R" to tell ALF to locate the next occurrence of the text "Security level" in the file being displayed. Thus, you can search through the file, repeating jumps with "R" or starting new ones with "J." The only restriction is that the file is searched sequentially, from top to bottom. You cannot jump "backwards."

[K]ill Messages

Main Menu Command. This command is used to erase one or more messages. Only the sender, addressee or the SYSOP can kill a message. Please delete your outdated messages on a regular basis. The SYSOP also will periodically purge old messages to prevent ALF from becoming cluttered.

Enter "K" at the MAIN MENU. ALF will prompt you for the message number(s) to be deleted. Enter one or more message numbers, separated by spaces. If you do not have proper security to erase the message, ALF will inform you.

You also can delete a message as soon as you have read it. While reading messages, select the K)ill option at the end of each message to be deleted.

[L]ines per page

Utilities Menu Command. This command sets the number of lines that ALF will display before pausing. Typically, you will set this to the number of lines on your terminal screen.

If you set your Lines Per Page to 0, ALF will NEVER pause when displaying text. You will still be able to manually pause the screen by pressing CTRL-S. To resume, press CTRL-Q.

[L]ist Files   **File Menu Command.** This command displays the directories or categories of files which are available for downloading from ALF.

The L)ist command can also be used along with a directory name (or number) to display the list of files in that directory (e.g., "L ALERTS"). A brief description, the filesize in bytes, and the date the file was posted on ALF accompanies each file name.

After issuing an "L" command, press carriage return to see a list of available directories, or specify which directory you want to see.

You can save time and keystrokes by stacking your requests. For example, "L ALERTS GENERAL" will list all files in the ALERTS directory **and** in the GENERAL directory.

You can temporarily suspend output to your screen after initiating the "L" command by pressing CTRL-S. Press CTRL-Q to resume. The CTRL-X or CTRL-K commands terminate the output to the screen **and** return you to the Files Menu.

"L U" will always list the **u**pload directory, if it is available to you. "L A" will list **a**ll directories.

[M]essage margin   **Utilities Menu Command.** This command is used to alter the right margin on messages that you enter. This will affect **all** of your messages. The margin can be set between 8 and 72 (72 is the default) by simply entering the desired column number when prompted to do so.

Use the M)argin command from the editing subfunction's command line to change the right margin for **just the current message** being entered. The editor is accessed while entering a message.

[N]ew files   **File Menu Command.** This command will list files added to ALF since a given date, or since the last time you checked the file list. When prompted for a date, enter the desired date in numerical format with no characters separating the month, day, and year. For example, "032090" would list files added to ALF since March 20, 1990. Or, press carriage return at the date prompt to use the date you last checked for files.

Next, you will be asked for a directory to scan. Type the directory name(s) separated by spaces. Or, to scan **all** of the directories on ALF, type "A". Pressing carriage return at the prompt returns you to the Files Menu.

You can stack the N)ew command with a date. For example, enter "N MMDDYY" (e.g., "N 032091"), or enter "N S" to specify files new **since** you last checked, directly from the File Menu. You will then be asked for the directory you would like to scan.

You can also pre-specify the directories to be scanned. For example, "N 032091 ALERTS GENERAL" lists files added to ALF on or after March 20, 1991 in the ALERTS and GENERAL directories.

[O]perator page

Main Menu Command. Type "O" to page the SYSOP, so you may chat directly with the SYSOP. This command sounds the speaker on the system computer for 30 seconds. If available, the SYSOP will initiate the **Chat** mode.

Leave a C)omment or E)nter a message for the SYSOP if a page is unsuccessful. Your page request remains on the SYSOP's screen for the remainder of your session, so the page may be answered even though the initial attempt fails.

[P]assword change

Utilities Menu Command. This command allows you to change the password used to log onto ALF. Once changed, ALF will expect the new password when you next log on. Passwords may have up to 15 characters.

Anyone who knows your password can log on as you and read your personal mail or use other system privileges you may have.

[P]ersonal Download

File Menu Command. ALF allows the SYSOP to address a file to one specific caller or to a group of callers to download. Personal downloads are unique from other files that are available for callers to download in that only the person (or group) that the SYSOP designates can view or download personal files.

[P]ersonal Mail

Main Menu Command. This command will display the message numbers of all messages that you sent or that were sent specifically to you. Messages sent to all users (public messages) are **not** listed. Messages marked with " * " are private messages.

ALF also lets you know at logon if you have personal mail. You may read new messages at logon by answering "Y"es to the mail prompt. During your session, enter "R T S" at the menu prompt to **read** messages sent **to** you **since** your last session.

[Q]uit

Global Command. Type "Q". Then press either "S" to end your session; or "M" to go to ALF's MAIN MENU; or "F" to go to ALF's FILE MENU; or "U" to go to ALF's UTILITIES MENU; or "C" to leave the current conference or subboard and return to the MAIN board.

[R]ead Messages

Main Menu Command. This command allows you to read messages sent by other callers. Many options are available to specify what messages you wish to read. To read messages, specify a Range and a Filter. The Range tells ALF which messages to show you (e.g., all messages sent S)ince you last read them). The Filter further narrows the messages in the Range specified (e.g., only messages addressed T)o you).

Range and Filter options are typed on the Message Read command line: Msg # 1-100 (H)elp,S)ince,L)ast,T)o,F)rom,M)ine, text [Q]uit)? "Msg # 1-100" shows the first and last message numbers available. Other commands shown in this prompt are examples of Range and Filter options. (See *Chapter 3: Messaging* for specific range and filter options.)

[R]ead profile

Utilities Menu Command. This command lists your current user-selected settings, i.e., expert/novice mode, graphics, file transfer protocol, UPPER/lower case, line feeds, nulls, prompt bell, and others.

ALF remembers your preferences for the various system parameters from one session to the next.

[S]can messages

Main Menu Command. This command allows you to quickly review messages. It displays on a single line the message number, sender and receiver names, and the date and subject of each message. You may specify which messages to scan. To see only a list of the message numbers and topics, use the T)opic scan command.

[S]earch files

File Menu Command. This command scans file names and descriptions for a keyword or for a "wildcard" file specification. Thus, you can search for a specific file, locate a group of files dealing with a specific topic, or identify certain types of files (e.g., .BAS, .COM, .EXE).

At the prompt, enter the text string to scan. Case (upper or lower) is ignored in the search. When prompted, type the directory name(s) you wish to scan, each separated by spaces. Scan all directories on ALF by typing "A" at this prompt. However, the directory file is very large, and it could take several minutes to scan All directories.

You can stack the S)earch command with the desired text string. For example, enter "S COW ALERTS" to search for the string "COW" in the ALERTS directory. A string that occurs as part of a file name or description will still produce a match, thus ALF will list all files with a) ".COW" as a filename extension, b) "COW" as part of the file name, or c) "COW" as part of a word or term in the file description.

S)earch supports "wildcards" ? and * in file names. E.g., "S LIST*.ZIP" will find the file LIST543.ZIP.

[S]tatistics of Usage

Utilities Menu Command. This command will display the number of calls that ALF has processed to date, the number of messages available to read, active users, as well as the space available for new users and new messages.

[T]oggles

Utilities Menu Command. This command allows you to turn certain ALF settings on and off.

The options in TOGGLE are: A)utodownload, B)ulletin, C)ase change, F)ile, H)ilite, L)ine feeds, N)ulls, T)urbokey, and X)pert

[T]opic of messages

Main Menu Command. This command allows you to quickly review messages. T)opic scan displays the message number(s) which have the topic(s) you specify.

[U]pload Files

File Menu Command. Uploading is the transfer of files from your computer to ALF. Uploading to ALF is restricted. Contact the SYSOP for upload security and permission to upload agriculture-related files. Enter "U" from the Files Menu, and ALF will prompt you for the filename you wish to upload. If ALF finds an existing file with the same filename (even with a different extension), you will not be able to upload unless you assign the file a different name. If you have not set a default protocol, ALF will prompt you to select one.

You can stack the "U" command with the file name, i.e., enter "U filename" directly from the File Menu. For example, type "U COW.ZIP" to upload a file called COW.ZIP.

You can override the default protocol by including it at the end of the command line. For example, "U COW.ZIP X" uploads COW.ZIP using Xmodem no matter what the default protocol is.

[U]ser log   **Utilities Menu Command.** This command offers two ways to list ALF users. You will be prompted for either: U)sers or R)ecent callers.

The "U)sers" option lists all users by name, city and State, and the date and time of his/her last call. The "R)ecent" callers option generates a list of callers in reverse chronological order from the most recent caller to the least recent caller, and shows the time/date of their last call(s).

[U]tilities   **Main Menu Command.** This command accesses ALF's Utility Menu.
Menu   Selections on this menu allow you to individualize ALF's output to meet your system's requirements and your personal preferences.

[V]iew   **File Menu Command.** This command displays a list of files contained
Archives   within a compressed (ZIPped) file. You will be prompted for the names of files you wish to view. Type the desired name(s), separated by spaces. If you press carriage return without entering a filename, you will return to the File Menu.

You can stack the V)iew command with the desired file name. That is, enter "V filename". For example, type "V COW.ZIP" to view the files included in the compressed file COW.ZIP.

You can only View files that are compressed with a supported extension, such as .ZIP or .ARC. Entering a file with an unsupported extension, such as .EXE, will return a message stating that the view is not implemented for that file.

[V]iew only supports exact matches and not "wildcards."

[V]iew   **Main Menu Command.** This command checks conferences which you
conference   have joined, reports the number of new messages in each and whether
mail   any are addressed to you.

The [V]iew command gives the option to J)oin the displayed conference, i.e., make it your current message base, or U)njoin, which removes your name from the conference. (Although a new conference mail is listed when you log onto ALF, you are not given the option at this point to join the conferences in which you have mail.)

V)iew will not report on conferences you have not joined. Use the J)oin command to join a conference for the first time.

[W]ho's on?   **Main Menu Command.** This command lists the names of callers who are currently logged on to ALF.

e[X]pert on/off toggle   **Global Command.** This command switches between the **Novice** mode and the **Expert** mode. In novice mode, ALF displays a menu before each command, and gives detailed information when asking you for input. Expert mode bypasses menu displays and detailed information. When you are comfortable with ALF's command structure, Expert mode will make your session much faster.

Each time you select the "X" command, ALF will toggle (alternate) between Expert and Novice modes.

Note: Although this is a global command, to access it from the Utilities Menu you must first select [T]oggles, then type "X".

TIP: Capture-to-disk and print a copy of ALF's menus, then switch to Expert mode using the printed menus for reference. This will make your session much faster.

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